ED 423 227 PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION:
AN ACTIVITY ON STAGES OF CONCERN.

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ABSTRACT

A university supervisor used a "Stages of Concern" activity to promote reflective practice in preservice teachers. She wanted to show student teachers early in the semester that changes could be predicted, followed, and charted through their practicum to assess professional growth. The "Stages of Concern" model provides an overview of changes that will occur in processing any initiative. The model includes impact, task, and self stages that address refocusing, collaboration, consequence, management, personal, informational, and awareness concerns. The class activity involved the use of a reflective journal or learning log. The teacher introduced the stages of concern model; asked students to think of an example to use with the model; began a discussion of growth within each stage; had students develop expressions of concern for stages in their student teaching practicum; and continued discussion by asking students to reflect and write upon which stage best represented their growth at any moment during student teaching. Student teachers were expected to comprehend the stages of concern as an approach to facilitating change and apply the stages of concern to an educational innovation. (SM)

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PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION: AN ACTIVITY ON STAGES OF CONCERN

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PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION:

AN ACTIVITY ON STAGES OF CONCERN

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Purpose of Activity : Within teacher education, the need for reflective practitioners is crucial to both the development of the preservice teacher as well as the seasoned professional. One tool that lays a foundation and traces important growth in the life of a reflective practitioner has been identified as the "Stages of Concern" (Hall, 1979) -- a part of a Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAN) to identify the process of teacher change (Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). Teacher change, by way of new programs and practices, may vary from person to person in intensity; therefore, seven stages of concern have been identified as common experiences of teachers involved in a change initiative. Identifying such stages has wider implications for assisting teachers to move to higher levels of concern.

As a university supervisor, I wanted to show student teachers early in the semester that changes can be predicted, followed, and charted throughout their practicum to assess professional growth. I wanted to assist them in identifying their stages of concern to encourage further growth. Such reflective assessment needs to continue from the beginning of the teacher's professional career to the moment of retirement.

Model: The "Stages of Concern" model provides an overview of the changes that will occur in processing any initiative, often called an "innovation," to be incorporated in the educational arena. The model moves from a beginning awareness, to management concerns, and finally to the impact on students in the classroom. The stages and expressions of concern are outlined below:

	Stages of Concern		Expressions of Concern
IMPACT	6	Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better.
	5	Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing to what other instructors aredoing
	4	Consequence	How is my use affecting kids?
TASK	3	Management	I seem to be spending all my time getting materials ready.
SELF	2	Personal	How will using it affect me?
	1	Informational	I would like to know more about it.
	0	Awareness	I am not concerned about it -- the innovation.

An example of the "Stages of Concern" in Student Teaching was discussed by Hall (1979), who highlights three dimensions of SELF / TASK / IMPACT (shown to the left of the model):

SELF — When involvement with student teaching began, the student's concern focused on self: Will I survive student teaching? Will my supervising and cooperative teachers like me? Will the school faculty accept me?

TASK — When concerns about self decreased, then task concerns emerged: Where do I find equipment to teach? How do I distribute materials? How do I organize for all that needs to be done for a lesson?

IMPACT — When self and task concerns diminished (both of which are focused inwardly on the teacher), then impact concerns might develop (focusing outwardly to the students): How well are the students learning? Am I teaching them what they need to know? Am I using the best methods and materials for effective instruction for my class?

One can see that such stages of concern play a prominent role during student teaching and can be predicted, followed, and charted throughout the intensive semester of growth and change.

Intended Audience : This activity was created for student teachers; however, any educator who needs to chart the development of an innovation in education can use these stages in facilitating change in curriculum and instruction in whole language, collaborative grouping, process writing, collaborative discipline, integrated curriculum, and many other current initiatives.

Materials: Reflective Journal or Learning Log

Time Needed: Open

Procedures: The following procedures are recommended:

1. Introduce student teachers to the model of "Stages of Concern."
2. Ask student teachers to think of an example, such as Cooperative Learning, to use with the model. Have students develop expressions and questions for given example at each the stages of concern.
3. Begin a discussion that asks the question, "With each new stage, does growth occur in a linear progression or does change occur in a recursive pattern in which stages often must be repeated? (Facilitating change is often a messy process in which for any innovation, stages become recursive.)
4. Have student teachers develop expressions of concern for stages in their student teaching practicum. What questions would they ask at each stage? After discussion, show student teachers the broader divisions of SELF / TASK / IMPACT as described by Hall (1979).
5. Continue discussion by asking student teachers to reflect on which stage best represents their growth at any moment in time. Have them write in a journal or learning log which stage best expresses their concerns in student teaching. (This exercise may be repeated several times during the practicum.) Give student teachers the opportunity to share their reflections with one another. Facilitator may want to collect, read, and comment on reflections by asking the following questions in journals to further thinking:

Can you still be very TASK driven and show signs of IMPACT at the same time? Where do you think you will be in a month's time? Are there days when you feel that you are still concerned with SELF issues? How can I help you to work toward IMPACT during your last four weeks of student teaching? Are seasoned educators still concerned about SELF issues when they approach a new innovation?

Expected Outcomes - Student teachers are expected to:

1. Comprehend the "Stages of Concern" as an approach to facilitate change whether one is a newcomer or as a seasoned professional who continues to search for better learning opportunities for students .
2. Apply the "Stages of Concern" to an innovation in education.
3. Reflect and write about which stage best represents their growth at any moment during their student teaching semester.

Adaptations for Other Audiences: "Stages of Concern" can be used in preservice field experiences, student teaching, professional interns, teachers, teacher educators, and school / university personnel.

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